

Semicolons

A **semicolon** sometimes works in the same way that a comma does. At other times, it works like a period and indicates a stronger pause.

500.1

To Join Two Independent Clauses

You can join two independent clauses with a semicolon when there is no coordinating conjunction (like *and* or *but*) between them. (See 564.2 for more information about independent clauses.)

In the future, some cities may rest on the ocean floor; other cities may float like islands.

Floating cities sound great; however, I get seasick.

TIP: Independent clauses can stand alone as separate sentences.

500.2

To Separate Groups in a Series with Commas

Use a semicolon to separate a series of phrases that already contain commas.

We crossed the stream; unpacked our lunches, cameras, and journals; and finally took time to rest.
(The second phrase contains commas.)

Ellipses

An **ellipsis** (three periods with a space before, between, and after) is used to show omitted words or sentences and to show a pause in dialogue.

500.3

To Show Omitted Words

Use an ellipsis to show that one or more words have been left out of a quotation.

"Give me liberty or give me death."

"Give me liberty or . . . death."

500.4

To Show a Pause

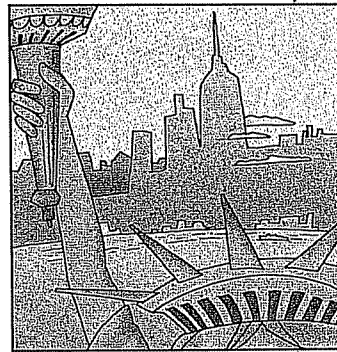
Use an ellipsis to indicate a pause in dialogue.

"That's . . . incredible!" I cried.

Semicolons

For each sentence below, write the word or words that should be followed by a semicolon. Write the semicolons, too.

Example: Our family drove from Omaha to New York City the trip was very long.
City;



1. We locked up the house packed our luggage, toys, and extra food in the trunk and then got on the road.
2. My mom checked a map to find the best route Dad drove the car.
3. We drove through some midwestern states the middle Atlantic states of Ohio, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey and finally crossed the bridge into New York City.
4. We could see the skyscrapers of New York long before we got there the buildings were really tall!
5. We were all very tired on our first night in the city we checked into our hotel and went to bed.
6. The next day we were ready to see the sights our first stop was Central Park.

Next Step: Write a compound sentence about something that might happen on a family trip. Use a semicolon to join the independent clauses.

Semicolons

A **semicolon** can be used instead of a comma and a coordinating conjunction to connect two independent clauses. (See *Write Source* page 500.)

Example

It was supposed to snow today, *but* it didn't.

It was supposed to snow today; it didn't.



Directions

In each sentence below, replace the comma and coordinating conjunction with a semicolon. The first sentence has been done for you.

1. A few minutes ago, the sun was shining ~~yet~~ now it's raining!
2. Todd is all wet, and Terry is, too.
3. They got caught in the rain, but I didn't.
4. They were walking home from school, and the rain started.
5. They were near my house, so they ran for our door.
6. I got home early, so I escaped the rain.
7. They're staying here, and we're doing our homework together.
8. They needed to dry off first, though, for they were getting cold.
9. I gave Todd and Terry some dry clothes, but they didn't fit.
10. They called their mom, and she brought them some clothes.

The Next Step Write three sentences that use a comma and a coordinating conjunction to connect two independent clauses. (See *Write Source* page 600 for a list of coordinating conjunctions.) Trade papers with a partner. Rewrite each other's sentences, using a semicolon instead of the comma and conjunction.